All contributions to the Magazine Section should be addressed to

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an outcurve that cut the heart of the plate. The umpire called it a strike. The coach nodded again. This time my curve went outside by a foot, and the batter swung at it; but he was so far away he missed the ball a yard.

On the next try the batter came closer to the plate; but, having realized the advantage of that throw at his head, I shot another one close to his chin and drove him back. This made three balls on the batter, and my catcher began to fear I would walk him. I got the nod from the coach, and again my outcurve cut the plate—and the batter was out. He didn't even strike at it.

Our rooters rose and yelled their heads off. As I walked to the plate when the side was out, I began to see what a great thing it is to know the fine points of anything one is doing. While I had the strength, the coach's mind was responsible for my striking out that batter and the next two.

"Don't weaken," the coach impressed upon me; "but follow my instructions and you'll win."

And I did! Not only did I win a pitchers' battle; but I happened to have the honor of driving in the winning run myself with a two-base hit.

THAT night I was the hero of the college team. Red the rubber took all the credit for the victory, and I was glad to let him have it.

"I knows a ball player when I sees one," he said gleefully. "And I guess this is fine! There's a man here to see you," Red suddenly remembered, "and I think he's a big league scout."

That night the scout called on me; but before I had a chance to talk to him one of my friends came to me and said that I had scored the first point in getting into that Greek letter society.

The baseball scout was a nattily dressed man of about fifty years. He told me that McGraw had been interested in my work because I had asked him some questions one day on a train.

"Now, young fellow," he said, "I should like to sign you for next season if you care to play professional ball. I guess they'll give you about two thousand dollars a year for a starter. How about it?"

I didn't know what to say. I had a chance to realize my ambition; but I didn't want to leave college. I also knew that my parents would object.

"Can't you let the matter rest for awhile?" I asked him.

"I'll tell you what we can do," he said. "You sign an agreement that if you do play professional ball you will give us an option on your services. To bind it I'll advance you one hundred dollars."

I was behind in some of my bills, and I took the hundred.

Later I went back to the scout and handed him the money. "I don't want to ruin my college career," I said; "but after I graduate I might consider your offer. Wait, won't you?"

"I will if you will give me your word of honor that you will play with us if you play with anybody. Here is the address of the manager, and he is waiting to hear from you. You know he is very partial to college players, because he thinks their minds are easier to train."

THE next morning I received a letter from my mother in which she congratulated me on my victory. There was a tone of sadness in her letter, however; for she told me that my father had lost most of the money he had invested in a copper mine.

"I want you to get all the good out of college while you are there," she said; "for if things get worse you may not have a chance to return next year."

The next day there came a letter from my father in which he said things were worse, but that he didn't want my mother to know.

That night I sat down and wrote to the big league manager.

To be continued in an early number

VAUDEVILLE

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this waste. The successful vaudevillist rarely experiences a break in his bookings nowadays, and, especially if his act does not depend upon acoustics, he fills out his season with roof gardens, summer parks, and perhaps a circus.

Variety people make up an individual nation in the theatrical world. They have their own language, their own viewpoint, their own ambitions and grievances, besides their own clubs, hotels, and newspapers. The most important of these societies, both in New York, are the Vaudeville Comedy Club, which gives an annual benefit, and the White Rats, an aggressive organization that has conducted spunky fights against greedy agents and against the blacklist of the United Booking Offices. The White Rats publish a weekly periodical, known as "The Player"; but the real trade paper of the profession is issued in a green cover and called "Variety."

The real vaudeville performer—he usually insists upon alluding to himself as "the artist"—actually appears on the stage about forty minutes a day. His labor, however, is not quite so light as these figures make it seem. He must put on and take off his makeup afternoon and evening, and he must be in the theater during a good deal of the time he is not engaged. Monday morning he rehearses with the orchestra, and is assigned a number on the program of the week—vaudevillists, like convicts and hotel guests, being identified by numbers. His place in the bill depends upon the length of his turn, the stage room required for it, and its nature. Acts that can be given in front of a drop "in one" must be sandwiched between "full stage" acts; so that scenes may be set for the latter without interrupting the performance, and the experienced stage manager arranges his material with a keen eye to variety.

As important as the star dressing room to a leading woman, as vital as full-faced type to a star, is his place on the bill to a vaudevillist. By their numbers ye shall know them. Headliners are given a position midway in the entertainment, and insist upon it as "legitimate" actors upon the center of the stage. Minor acts open or close a show, and the prejudice against being assigned to either end is so great that many stage managers must sympathize with the Irishman who, being informed that a large percentage of the victims of a railway accident were passengers in the last car of the train, inquired, "Then, bedad, why don't they leave off the last car?"

A layman may ask reasonably how the managers of variety houses are able to pay double the salaries that prevail in other theaters, while they exact only half the price of admission. The explanation is simple. In the first place, as has been mentioned, they pay nothing but salaries: neither railway fares nor the cost of costumes and paraphernalia. They are not compelled to make big and expensive productions, to remunerate authors, or, most important of all, to divide with the managers of theaters in which their shows are given. Henry B. Harris or Frederick Thompson, presenting "The Country Boy" or "The Spendthrift" at the Chestnut Street Opera House, Philadelphia, or the National Theater, Washington, must divide equally, or nearly equally, with the lessees of those places of amusement. The vaudeville impresario assembles his own show in his own theater, and takes the entire amount paid in at the boxoffice. Even in these times, an exceedingly good bill can be put together for twenty-five hundred dollars, and, if the running expenses of the theater are two thousand, there remains a wide margin of profit.

THE United Booking Offices, which do business from New York, are as complete a trust as any in America. The "offices" are maintained by a combination that includes all the powerful vaudeville managers and all the big vaudeville circuits, from New York to San Francisco. There has been sporadic opposition, like that recently made by William Morris, who had the American and Plaza Music Halls in New York and a few others throughout the country; but the end of this opposition always has been compromise or defeat. Performers claim that they are not permitted to play for rival managements under pain of being placed on the dread "black list," and that, once so placed, they may as well retire from the business. Whether this be true or not (it probably is true), and however highhanded the conduct of the combination, the observer must concede that businesslike system, economical methods, and complete order have been established by the United Booking Offices.

This combination includes the Hammersteins, father and son, who have the Victoria Theater in New York; Percy Williams, who controls the Colonial, the Alhambra, the Bronx, and two theaters in Brooklyn; B. F. Keith, who operates theaters in the metropolis, in Boston, in Philadelphia, and in Providence; and the heads of great circuits like the Orpheum and Sullivan & Considine's. There